

Knitting Community Together

Washington Park, Cincinnati

Cincinnati Bombshells



"Yarn bombing" is defined as the practice of affixing knitted or crocheted yarn to public objects. As an ephemeral art, yarn bombing projects are easily removed and leave no lasting damage on the environment or streetscape. They are also time-consuming to produce and require a lot of preparation and forethought. In 2005, a small shop owner named Magda Sayeg in Houston, Texas, inadvertently created her first "yarn bomb" artwork when she put some knitting over her door knob. Since then, the medium has become a global craze, often used to make political or social justice oriented statements.



The Bombshells of Cincinnati is a group of fiber artists, mostly women between the ages of 25-65, that started in 2011 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Pam Kravetz, an artist, and educator from The Queen City started the Cincinnati Bombshells by asking some of her close friends in the artistic community if they would be interested in doing yarn bombing. Their intention is to evoke a feeling within the viewer of re-encounter with the urban spaces of Cincinnati. In their manifesto, they express, "We aim to soften the edges of an otherwise cruel, harsh environment. We juxtapose vandalism with the non-threatening nature of fibers... Although the voice we have is cheerful and fun, it's also purposeful."



Cozy Curiosities 2023

The Cincinnati Bombshells installed their piece, Cozy Curiosities, on January 26, 2023 at Washington Park for the upcoming Mittenfest. The piece is situated next to Music Hall, using the beautiful building as a backdrop. Representing a collective group of artists, the piece consists of carefully knitted yarn squares approximately 35 feet tall, over 100 feet long, and over 30 feet wide. This installation, commissioned by 3CDC, is meant to give the illusion of warmth. The work includes large suns and even a yarn bombed fireplace and chandelier.

The granny squares were "an easy pick" for the other two alcoves with the hope to have a lot of people feel fond memories of snuggling under a granny square blanket they or a loved one has made. For this year's Mittenfest, more than one hundred people participated. Upon its removal, the 1,600 granny squares of Cozy Curiosities will be reused in installations throughout 2023. In the fall of 2023, the Bombshells hope to sew the squares into scarves and give them out to those in need in the city, as they have done for projects in the past.

The results of this project embody the mission of DAAPcares. We discovered the radical community-building potentialities of yarn bombing, which necessitates both a significant investment of time and labor and the creative collaboration amongst many artists where no single person stands out as a primary author. Additionally, the Cincinnati Bombshells make the conscious decision to emphasize the process over the product as a way of mending gaps in our society caused by the stresses of capitalism and modernity.

It is radical because it rejects consumerist ideology, foregoing the mass-produced in favor of the handmade, local, and domestic. And finally, it is common for the Cincinnati Bombshells to reuse the material after installation to make mittens, hats, and other items at the site to be taken by any passersby who need them. This dimension of community service, combined with the other unique attributes of the medium, makes the Cincinnati Bombshells a vital part of the Cincinnati urban landscape.



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